An Auto-Sociological Study of How My Academic Vocation Emerges from the Cognitive and Cultural Lineage of My Father, Professor Volodymyr Oleksandrovych Taran

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I write this study not only as an observer of intergenerational processes but as their direct participant. My academic trajectory, my intellectual orientation, and the conceptual frameworks through which I interpret the world are rooted in a lineage that precedes me. To analyze this lineage sociologically is not an act of sentiment but a methodological necessity. I am the daughter of Professor and Doctor of Philosophical Sciences Volodymyr Oleksandrovych Taran, a scholar who continues to teach philosophy at Zaporizhzhia National University during wartime in Ukraine and whose lifelong intellectual and civic commitments constitute the structural foundation of my own scholarly identity. My academic vocation is not incidental. It is the outcome of inherited cognitive dispositions supported by a cultural environment shaped by his ongoing intellectual work.

CHAPTER I

Situating Myself Within an Intellectual Lineage: A Sociological Inquiry Into the Transmission of Cognitive Dispositions and Cultural Capital

I am the daughter of a man whose life course traversed two demanding institutional fields: first, senior service in the internal-security apparatus of the Ukrainian state; later, university-level philosophical teaching and research. Across these phases he embodied a dense concentration of what sociology calls *institutionalized cultural capital* and *normative commitment to public order*. His path provided a highly structured environment in which my own cognitive and ethical development took shape.

My intellectual vocation, however, is not the product of a single national context. I later received my own formal academic training in the United States, in a program oriented toward migration, humanitarian governance, and the legal–institutional management of cross-border lives. My perspective is therefore shaped by a double exposure: a childhood socialization framed by post-Soviet Ukrainian state institutions and an adult education framed by American academic and policy-oriented discourse.

This chapter establishes the basic premise of the study: intellectual identity is produced through the interaction of heritable cognitive architecture, familial cultural capital, and the structured opportunities provided by educational institutions. This interaction is not abstract. It is visible in the lived experience of individuals like myself, who grew up in households saturated with work, discipline, and political–philosophical discussion, and later entered a different national field of higher education.

The concept of *heritable cognitive dispositions* provides a useful entry point.

Interdisciplinary research suggests that such traits as verbal abstraction, sustained attention, and the capacity for conceptual integration exhibit measurable heritability. These traits do not predetermine outcomes; they define a horizon of possible intellectual engagements. In my case, these dispositions were activated not in a vacuum but in a home where argumentation, normative reflection, and analytic precision were part of everyday life.

Sociology also insists that dispositions become meaningful only when embedded in *familial cultural capital*. My father's professional work, his style of reasoning, his mode of relating to institutions, and his everyday language about duty, responsibility, and law created what might be described as a *micro-field of intellectual socialization*. Books, documents, legal texts, philosophical essays, and political analyses were not distant objects; they were tools in use. The household functioned as a site where complex institutional and ethical questions were continuously interpreted.

From a Bourdieusian perspective, this setting cultivated a specific *habitus*: a durable system of cognitive and moral dispositions oriented toward order, coherence, and critical reflection. This habitus was formed long before I enrolled in any university. It structured how I listened to adults, how I interpreted news, and how I understood conflict, risk, and obligation. Later, when I entered American education, this habitus did not disappear; it encountered a new institutional field.

The third theoretical element necessary to situate my own academic vocation is the idea of *structural reproduction of intellectual life*. Families reproduce society not only biologically but symbolically. They transmit interpretive schemes, categories of judgment, and expectations about the legitimate uses of knowledge. In families marked by high concentrations of cultural and institutional capital, like mine, this transmission becomes particularly dense. Children learn early that concepts matter, that arguments have consequences, and that public institutions are neither neutral nor irrelevant.

My academic path, therefore, is best understood not as a self-generated project in the liberal–individualist sense, but as the *actualization of a pre-existing epistemic lineage* under specific historical and institutional conditions. The lineage itself was formed in the late Soviet and early post-Soviet decades, under the pressures of state transformation and later war. My education in the United States introduced a second reference frame, adding the language of rights, policy design, and transnational governance to an already existing matrix of responsibility and order.

This chapter provides the theoretical foundation for what follows. It advances four core propositions

— Intellectual identity emerges at the intersection of inherited cognitive architecture, familial cultural capital, and institutional trajectories
— Families with dense concentrations of cultural and institutional capital function as primary sites of epistemic transmission
— Individual academic vocations can be analyzed as realized forms of intergenerational intellectual lineages rather than purely individual preferences
— In contexts marked by war and geopolitical instability, such lineages acquire heightened importance as carriers of continuity

I write from within this process. My father's long-term intellectual and civic commitments, and my subsequent training within a different national academic system, together constitute

the structural context of my work. I am not outside this lineage. I am one of its most recent manifestations.

CHAPTER II

Inherited Cognitive Architecture and the Formation of Academic Identity: A Sociological Analysis from Within My Own Intellectual Lineage

In this chapter I examine the micro-level mechanisms through which inherited dispositions and family-based socialization are translated into an academic identity. I do so from an explicitly reflexive position, treating my own trajectory as a case through which to explore broader sociological questions.

The first mechanism concerns the relationship between *inherited cognitive architecture* and early socialization. Empirical research in behavioral genetics suggests that complex cognitive traits are shaped by both genetic and environmental factors. Sociology adds that these traits become socially relevant only when structured by interaction, expectation, and institutional opportunities. In my case, the predisposition toward abstraction and analytical reasoning encountered a domestic environment where such capacities were continuously invited and disciplined.

The household's internal norm was that arguments should be coherent, that claims should be justified, and that emotional reactions should eventually be brought under conceptual control. This was not articulated as a pedagogical program; it functioned as an implicit rule of interaction. Over time, this rule produced what might be described as *cognitive discipline*: a learned tendency to seek structure in complexity, to parse conflicting accounts, and to ask about the implicit norms underlying a given practice.

The second mechanism is the transmission of *embodied cultural capital*. Beyond books and credentials, families transmit styles of speech, bodily comportment, emotional regulation, and temporal orientation. In my childhood environment, time was structured around institutional responsibilities, deadlines, risk assessments, and the management of uncertainty. Later, in my father's academic phase, time was also structured around lectures, supervision, and research. For me, institutional rhythms and intellectual rhythms were never fully separate.

This has consequences for academic identity. Many students encounter universities as radically new environments, detached from their prior life-worlds. For me, education in the United States appeared simultaneously new and familiar. New, because the pedagogical style, normative assumptions, and institutional language differed significantly from what I had observed in Ukraine. Familiar, because the expectation of discipline, preparation, and argumentation matched dispositions formed long before. This duality can be conceptualized as *field translation*: the movement of a habitus formed in one socio-institutional context into another, where it is both strained and reactivated.

The third mechanism is the effect of *macro-structural conditions*—especially war and geopolitical instability—on micro-level intellectual trajectories. The escalation of armed conflict in Ukraine did not simply threaten physical security; it destabilized institutions, truncated careers, and forced many families into new forms of precarity. Under such conditions, the continuation of intellectual life acquires a symbolic and moral dimension. When a parent insists on maintaining teaching, reflection, and interpretive work under these circumstances, it communicates that knowledge is not a luxury of peace but part of societal

resilience.

For a child and later an adult observing this, the message is unambiguous: intellectual work is a form of responsibility. It must be continued even when its immediate material rewards are uncertain. This message has profoundly shaped my own orientation toward academic and professional labor. It underlies my decision to work in fields where research, policy, and lived vulnerability intersect—particularly in the domains of migration, family life, and cross-border inequalities.

From these mechanisms, several sociological principles crystallize

— Inherited cognitive predispositions gain social significance only when they encounter environments that invite and discipline them
— Embodied cultural capital transmitted in families can pre-adapt individuals to certain institutional fields, including academia
— War and geopolitical instability transform intellectual activity into a visible component of cultural resilience
— Individuals whose formative years are shaped by such environments are likely to understand academic work as a responsibility rather than as self-expression

These principles help situate my own academic identity within a broader theoretical framework. I am not simply someone who "chose" to study social and humanitarian issues in a U.S. institutional context. I am an outcome of a structured interplay between inherited dispositions, a high-density family environment of institutional and intellectual labor, and the macro-conditions of a country at war.

In this sense, my academic vocation is best described as an *actualized cognitive lineage*: a set of inherited capacities and socialized orientations that, under specific institutional opportunities, became a sustained engagement with sociological analysis and applied research.

CHAPTER III

Dual-Phase Paternal Trajectory as a Sociological Structure: Discipline, Reflexivity, and the Layering of Habitus

This chapter shifts focus from my own dispositions to the paternal trajectory that shaped the family environment in which those dispositions were formed. Rather than repeatedly foregrounding biographical labels, I treat that trajectory as a sociological structure: a sequence of positions in different institutional fields that generated specific forms of influence on the next generation.

The first phase was located in the field of internal security and law enforcement. This field is characterized by strong hierarchies, clearly codified roles, and intensive exposure to risk, conflict, and moral ambiguity. Its occupational culture emphasizes duty, loyalty, controlled aggression, and the capacity to take decisions under pressure. Even if children are not directly exposed to operational details, they absorb the *structure of feeling* associated with such work —the sense that order is fragile, that responsibility is non-negotiable, and that rules are not merely bureaucratic annoyances but tools for managing danger.

From a sociological standpoint, families connected to this field tend to transmit a *disciplinary moral habitus*: an orientation in which questions of right and wrong are immediately linked

to questions of consequence, enforcement, and institutional stability. My early understanding of society was shaped within this moral universe.

The second phase of my father's trajectory shifted into the university field. This field has its own logic: relative autonomy from direct state command, valorization of critical reflection, and the use of abstract categories to interpret concrete conflicts. The transition from one field to another did not erase earlier dispositions; it reworked them. The ethic of responsibility, cultivated in the first phase, was redirected into teaching, supervision, and theoretical analysis.

For my own formation, what matters is not the chronology but the *layering* of these influences. The disciplinary moral habitus of phase one and the reflexive, interpretive habitus of phase two did not cancel each other. Together they produced a composite structure in which:

— Normative questions are treated as serious and urgent
— Institutional structures are seen as necessary but also as objects of critique
— Intellectual work is expected to have ethical weight, not merely aesthetic elegance

This layered habitus significantly shaped how I later engaged with U.S. academic training. In American classrooms I encountered a different vocabulary—rights, due process, diversity, inclusion, evidence-based policy—but I interpreted these terms through an already-formed sensitivity to institutional fragility, moral risk, and the long-term consequences of decisions. My reading of American debates was never purely internal to the U.S. context; it was conditioned by a habitus formed in a post-Soviet and wartime society.

The dual-phase paternal trajectory therefore functions sociologically as a *generator of hybrid dispositions*. It anchors the child in a moral universe of discipline and obligation, then overlays that universe with tools of critical analysis and philosophical abstraction. The result, in my case, is an unusual compatibility with roles that demand both structure and reflexivity: working at the interface of law and vulnerability, policy and biography, migration and family.

The key argument of this chapter is that intergenerational transmission can be multi-phased without being contradictory. When institutional trajectories are coherent at the level of underlying values, their influences accumulate. Discipline and reflection do not oppose each other; they become mutually reinforcing elements of a complex habitus.

CHAPTER IV

Cultural Resilience and Intergenerational Continuity in Wartime Ukraine: Micro-Level Lineages Under Macro-Level Stress

This chapter situates my intellectual lineage within the broader macro-sociological context of wartime Ukraine. Here the focus shifts from individual biography to the structural relationship between *cultural resilience* and *intergenerational continuity*.

War operates as a radical stress-test on societies. It destroys infrastructures, fragments communities, accelerates demographic decline, and undermines institutional predictability. Under these conditions, the mechanisms that ordinarily reproduce culture—schools, universities, professional associations, local communities—are weakened. The question becomes: what carries meaning across generations when formal structures are under attack

One answer, suggested by my own case, is that families bearing high levels of cultural and institutional capital become crucial sites of *epistemic continuity*. When public provision falters, private environments take on functions that are normally distributed across wider structures. Intellectual practices—reading, discussing, teaching, reflecting—do not cease to exist; they are relocated and compressed.

In my family, the continuation of intellectual and ethical discussion during the war performed precisely this function. It signaled that the cognitive and moral frameworks through which we interpreted the world were not suspended by violence. Sociology would describe this as a form of *intergenerational cultural fortification*: families intentionally or implicitly reinforcing interpretive structures because external supports have become fragile.

Several patterns follow from this

— Cultural resilience under wartime conditions is partly a function of micro-level lineages that maintain practices of reflection, argumentation, and ethical evaluation
— Intergenerational continuity becomes more dependent on family-based transmission when formal institutions are disrupted or displaced
— Individuals socialized within such lineages are more likely to experience interpretive stability even when their material environment is unstable
— The experience of war can intensify the perceived obligation to preserve and transmit the intellectual and moral structures inherited from previous decades

Within this framework, my own academic identity appears not simply as a personal achievement but as an element in a larger adaptive system. My work in U.S. and European contexts is one way in which a Ukrainian intellectual lineage—formed under socialism, transition, and war—is extended into transnational debates. The lineage thereby contributes to global understandings of vulnerability, displacement, and responsibility.

CHAPTER V

Reconstructing Cultural Identity Through Intergenerational Continuity: My Academic Work as an Extension of a Ukrainian Intellectual Lineage

In the final analytical chapter, I connect the intergenerational processes described above to the problem of *postwar cultural reconstruction*. Rebuilding societies after large-scale violence involves more than reconstructing buildings or institutions; it requires re-establishing the narratives, categories, and moral horizons through which people make sense of their lives.

Intergenerational continuity plays a central role in this process. Families with strong intellectual and ethical traditions provide a reservoir of interpretive resources that can be drawn upon when public discourse is fragmented or polarized. My own academic work—shaped by a Ukrainian lineage and trained in an American institutional setting—participates in this reconstruction in several ways.

First, it contributes to what might be called *conceptual translation*. Themes that dominate Ukrainian experience—forced migration, loss, state violence, contested memory—must be rendered in terms intelligible to international actors: courts, agencies, policymakers, NGOs, universities. My education in the United States provided access to the dominant

terminologies of these fields. My upbringing and connection to Ukraine provided access to lived realities that those terminologies aim, often imperfectly, to describe.

Second, it enacts *reflexive continuity*. I do not simply reproduce the frames of my childhood. I subject them to analysis using the very tools I acquired abroad. This reflexive movement prevents intergenerational transmission from becoming rigid or mythologized. Instead, it allows inherited structures to be reinterpreted in light of new knowledge, new legal frameworks, and new ethical debates.

Third, it models a form of *transnational agency*. Rather than treating migration and global interconnection solely as sources of dislocation, I treat them as fields in which intergenerational lineages can assert themselves constructively. My work between the United States and Europe is one site where this assertion occurs. The intellectual and ethical structures formed in Ukraine inform how I approach policy questions, legal cases, and sociological inquiries in other national contexts.

Taken together, these dimensions suggest that my academic vocation is not only a product of intergenerational continuity but also a vector through which that continuity enters broader processes of cultural reconstruction. The lineage does not remain private. It becomes part of the contested public work of rebuilding meaning.

Conclusion

Intergenerational Intellectual Lineage as a Foundation for Transnational Academic and Civic Work

The analysis developed across these chapters supports a simple but demanding proposition: intellectual identity is best understood not as a private attribute but as an intergenerational, institutionally mediated, and historically situated structure.

In my case, this structure consists of

— Inherited cognitive dispositions oriented toward abstraction and analysis
— A family habitus shaped by state service, institutional discipline, and later philosophical work
— Socialization under war and instability, which transformed intellectual practice into a visible form of resilience
— Formal training in a U.S. academic institution focused on migration, law, and humanitarian governance
— Ongoing engagement with European and American fields where these different strands intersect

This combination allows me to function as what sociology might term a *carrier of transnational cultural capital*. I operate across legal systems, policy regimes, and academic traditions, yet my work is anchored in a specific Ukrainian intellectual lineage. That lineage is not reducible to any single institutional label or episode. It is the cumulative result of decades of state, academic, and familial labor.

The sociological significance of such a lineage lies in its capacity to link micro-level biographies with macro-level transformations. As Ukraine confronts the tasks of survival and future reconstruction, individuals shaped by similar intergenerational processes will play a

disproportionate role in translating experience into analysis, analysis into policy, and policy into lived change.

My own contribution is modest in scale but clear in structure. I extend a lineage. I do so consciously, reflexively, and across borders. In that sense, my academic work is not simply my own. It is one more channel through which a Ukrainian intellectual tradition adapts to a world in motion and insists on being heard.